



COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF CENSUS AND STATISTICS,

LABOUR TURNOVER, SEPTEMBER, 1955.

This report gives the results of a survey of labour turnover in Australian industry in the month of September, 1955, and compares these results with those obtained in similar surveys covering the months of March, 1949, March, 1950, March, 1952, March, 1953, September, 1954, and March, 1955.

Labour turnover is frequently measured by the number of engagements or separations (whichever is the lower) expressed as a percentage of average employment during the period under review. Table 1 below shows figures of both engagements and separations expressed as a percentage of average employment. "Separations" include dismissals and retrenchments as well as numbers of persons who leave of their own volition and a dissection of separations into these classes is given in Table 3.

The period covered in individual returns was not uniform, depending as it did on the dates on which pay-roll tax returns of individual businesses were made up in respect of August and September in the surveys for the month of September, and, in respect of February and March in the surveys covering the month of March. The figures should be interpreted as applying to an average of about four and a half weeks. The trends in labour turnover are most clearly shown by comparing successive turnover rates for the corresponding months of each year so as to avoid the effect of seasonal fluctuation. Labour turnover rates are influenced by the seasonal nature of employment particularly in the food, drink and tobacco industry and, to a lesser degree, in other industries.

Industrial Coverage

The surveys are based on a sample within certain industries of businesses subject to Pay-roll Tax. They exclude small businesses, and religious, benevolent and other similar organizations which are exempt from Pay-roll Tax. In addition, the surveys exclude rural industry, private domestic service, the professions (e.g., architects, consultant engineers, etc.) the shipping and stevedoring industry and all government employment and semi-government undertakings other than banks and airlines.

Some indication of the extent of the field surveyed is given by the fact that the figures relate to private businesses employing approximately 80 per cent. of the total number of employees in private employment.

Engagements and Separations

Table 1 shows that while there was a general fall in 1952 and 1953 from the 1950 level in turnover rates for the month of March, the 1955 March rates were higher than in 1953 and, for many of the categories shown in the table, were as high as in March, 1950.

Results of the latest survey, which is for the month of September, 1955, can only be directly compared with the results of the September, 1954 survey, since seasonal factors enter into any comparison of turnover rates for March and September. This comparison of September, 1954 and September, 1955 reveals no such definite change as was evident in the comparison of the March, 1953 and March, 1955 results. (As indicated above a similar survey was not undertaken for March, 1954). Engagements in September, 1955 were at about the same rate as in September, 1954. Separation rates were generally higher for manual and other workers in both manufacturing and non-manufacturing industries - but the increases were not great, and in one category (female manual workers in manufacturing industries) the September, 1955 rate was lower.

Table 2 shows how separation rates for manual workers have changed in the main industry groups. It indicates that, while the sharp increases in March, 1955 rates over the March, 1953 rates were apparent in all industrial groups, the overall changes in the rates for September, 1954 and September, 1955 do not reveal any general pattern of change affecting all industry groups. Apart from several sharp rises in the rates in some of the Non-Manufacturing industries (viz. Mining, Building and Road Transport) the rates showed only minor variation as compared with September, 1954.

TABLE 1 : ENGAGEMENTS AND SEPARATIONS : 1949 TO 1955
(Percentage of average number of employees in each group)

Period	Manufacturing		Non-Manufacturing (a)		All Industries (a)	
	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers	Manual Workers	Other Workers
<u>MALES</u>						
<u>Engagements</u>						
March, 1949	9.3	1.8	8.1	3.5	8.9	3.0
March, 1950	8.4	2.2	7.3	2.8	8.0	2.6
March, 1952	6.0	1.9	6.5	2.6	6.2	2.4
March, 1953	4.7	1.6	4.8	2.1	4.8	1.9
September, 1954	6.6	2.2	7.5	2.2	6.9	2.2
March, 1955	8.0	2.4	9.2	2.8	8.4	2.7
September, 1955	6.4	2.2	7.6	2.5	6.9	2.4
<u>Separations</u>						
March, 1949	8.5	1.4	7.1	2.8	8.0	2.3
March, 1950	8.7	1.6	7.5	2.4	8.3	2.1
March, 1952	7.0	1.9	6.9	2.6	7.0	2.4
March, 1953	4.2	1.6	4.2	2.7	4.2	2.3
September, 1954	6.0	1.7	6.9	2.1	6.3	2.0
March, 1955	7.5	2.0	8.4	2.9	7.8	2.6
September, 1955	6.4	2.1	7.3	2.5	6.7	2.3
<u>FEMALES</u>						
<u>Engagements</u>						
March, 1949	11.0	3.9	9.8	9.9	10.7	8.5
March, 1950	10.5	4.8	12.1	5.8	11.0	5.6
March, 1952	6.4	4.0	8.1	5.5	6.8	5.1
March, 1953	9.0	4.0	7.3	5.8	8.5	5.4
September, 1954	7.0	4.1	6.0	5.3	6.8	5.0
March, 1955	8.9	5.4	7.9	6.5	8.7	6.2
September, 1955	6.5	4.7	6.7	6.6	6.5	6.1
<u>Separations</u>						
March, 1949	8.9	3.4	9.4	8.2	9.0	7.1
March, 1950	8.6	4.4	11.0	5.7	9.3	5.3
March, 1952	9.7	4.2	9.9	5.8	9.7	5.4
March, 1953	6.1	3.2	4.9	4.6	5.9	4.3
September, 1954	6.6	3.7	5.0	4.2	6.2	4.1
March, 1955	8.9	5.0	7.0	5.6	8.5	5.5
September, 1955	6.3	3.8	6.1	4.8	6.2	4.6

(a) See introductory text for note on industry coverage.

TABLE 2 : SEPARATION RATES FOR MANUAL WORKERS BY INDUSTRY, 1949 TO 1955.

(Percentage of average number of employees)

Industry	Males						
	March, 1949	March, 1950	March, 1952	March, 1953	Sept., 1954	March, 1955	Sept., 1955
Manufacturing -							
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building	8.1	7.4	6.3	4.2	6.2	7.4	6.8
Textiles ..	9.1	9.2	9.1	2.5	5.9	7.1	5.3
Clothing ..	5.0	6.3	8.5	3.9	5.1	5.4	5.4
Food, Drink, Tobacco	10.2	13.0	8.8	6.3	5.8	10.0	6.5
Furniture, sawmilling and woodworking ..	11.6	9.9	7.0	3.5	6.1	6.1	5.6
Paper, printing ..	4.5	4.8	3.8	1.3	3.0	3.5	3.5
Other manufacturing	8.3	8.5	7.7	3.8	7.0	8.0	7.3
All Manufacturing	8.5	8.7	7.0	4.2	6.0	7.5	6.4
Mining ..	3.4	4.1	2.7	1.9	2.5	3.8	3.3
Building ..	10.7	8.4	10.9	6.4	10.4	11.8	14.0
Road Transport ..	6.7	7.4	4.1	4.1	4.1	9.0	8.1
Wholesale Trade ..	5.6	8.1	5.4	4.7	7.1	9.4	6.2
Retail Trade ..	5.1	5.6	4.8	2.7	5.4	6.0	4.6
All Other (a) ..	9.8	10.5	9.5	3.8	5.7	7.8	4.8
All Industries (a)	8.0	8.3	7.0	4.2	6.3	7.8	6.7
Industry	Females						
	March, 1949	March, 1950	March, 1952	March, 1953	Sept., 1954	March, 1955	Sept., 1955
Manufacturing -							
Engineering, metal working and vehicle building	11.6	12.1	10.8	4.9	7.5	9.6	7.2
Textiles ..	9.1	7.1	9.0	3.8	5.5	7.0	4.6
Clothing ..	5.0	5.8	9.5	6.0	6.8	7.2	5.9
Food, Drink, Tobacco	21.7	13.7	9.2	10.4	7.8	16.1	8.9
Paper, printing ..	6.6	9.3	10.4	3.8	6.3	5.8	4.0
Other manufacturing	7.5	13.2	10.5	5.1	4.8	8.5	6.8
All Manufacturing	8.9	8.6	9.7	6.1	6.6	8.9	6.3
Wholesale Trade ..	4.9	6.7	5.4	4.4	7.0	5.9	9.9
Retail Trade ..	5.5	6.3	7.9	2.8	4.8	5.3	3.8
Other Industries ..	11.4	13.5	12.1	6.6	4.9	8.2	7.7
All Industries (a)	9.0	9.3	9.7	5.9	6.2	8.5	6.2

(a) See introductory text for note on industrial coverage.

Separation Rates by Class of Separation

In Table 3 separations have been classified by type of separation (dismissed, retrenched, left and other). Businesses submitting returns were asked to class employees as "dismissed" where employment was terminated on the employer's initiative for disciplinary or other reasons; as "retrenched" where the employment was terminated, permanently or otherwise, on the employer's initiative for reasons such as a reduction in the scale of operations, breakdown in machinery, shortage of materials, completion of the job etc.; as "left" where employment was terminated at the employee's initiative; and as "other" where the separation was due to death, injury, permanent retirement (including women leaving to be married) enlistment in the forces or other reasons.

Table 3 shows, for male and female workers, this analysis of separations in September, 1954 and September, 1955 in the main industry groups. Similar information for March, 1950, March, 1952 and March, 1953 can be obtained from the reports on Quarterly Business Surveys No. 20 and No. 24. Figures for March, 1955 are shown in a report entitled "Labour Turnover - March, 1955," issued on 12th December, 1955.

Table 3 indicates that the largest element in total separations is still the number of persons leaving of their own volition.

The sharpest increase in the rates for male manual workers leaving is in road transport, where the rate was 6.8 per cent. of average employment in September, 1955, compared with 2.4 per cent. in September, 1954. Nevertheless, this was lower than the high rate of 8.0 per cent. reached in March, 1955.

The rates for the building industry reflect the casual nature of employment in that industry. They were exceptionally high in September, 1955, both for retrenchments and persons leaving, and were higher than they were in either September, 1954 or March, 1955.

In contrast with male rates, the rates of female manual workers leaving in September, 1955 were, for most industry groups, lower than in September, 1954. Exceptions were the "other manufacturing group" and the "other (non-manufacturing) industries group", for which the rates were higher.

TABLE 3 : ANALYSIS OF SEPARATIONS FOR MANUAL WORKERS,
SEPTEMBER, 1954 AND SEPTEMBER, 1955.

(Percentage of average employment in each group)

	SEPTEMBER, 1954					SEPTEMBER, 1955				
	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL	D.	R.	L.	O.	TOTAL
MALES										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.6	0.2	5.3	0.1	6.2	0.7	0.9	5.1	0.1	6.8
Textiles ..	0.5	0.4	4.9	0.1	5.9	0.5	0.1	4.5	0.2	5.3
Clothing ..	0.6	0.4	3.9	0.2	5.1	0.6	0.4	4.3	0.1	5.4
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.7	0.8	4.2	0.1	5.8	0.6	0.7	5.0	0.2	6.5
Furniture, Woodworking	0.5	0.1	5.3	0.2	6.1	0.8	0.2	4.5	0.1	5.6
Paper, printing ..	0.3	-	2.6	0.1	3.0	0.2	0.3	2.9	0.1	3.5
Other manufacturing	1.1	0.7	5.0	0.2	7.0	0.6	0.2	6.4	0.1	7.3
All manufacturing	0.7	0.4	4.8	0.1	6.0	0.6	0.6	5.1	0.1	6.4
Mining ..	0.1	0.1	2.1	0.2	2.5	0.2	0.2	2.6	0.3	3.3
Building ..	1.2	2.0	6.7	0.5	10.4	1.7	3.9	8.3	0.1	14.0
Road Transport ..	1.6	0.1	2.4	-	4.1	1.0	0.2	6.8	0.1	8.1
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1.1	0.5	4.9	0.2	6.7	0.7	0.4	4.6	0.1	5.8
Other Industries ..	0.4	0.1	4.8	0.4	5.7	0.9	0.9	2.9	0.1	4.8
All Industries	0.8	0.6	4.7	0.2	6.3	0.7	0.8	5.1	0.1	6.7
FEMALES										
Manufacturing -										
Engineering, vehicles, etc.	0.5	0.3	6.4	0.3	7.5	0.8	0.3	5.9	0.2	7.2
Textiles ..	0.4	0.4	4.5	0.2	5.5	0.3	0.2	3.9	0.2	4.6
Clothing ..	2.2	-	4.4	0.2	6.8	1.2	0.5	4.0	0.2	5.9
Food, Drink, Tobacco	0.5	0.9	6.3	0.1	7.8	0.7	2.4	5.7	0.1	8.9
Paper, printing ..	0.6	-	5.6	0.1	6.3	0.1	0.3	3.5	0.1	4.0
Other manufacturing	0.6	0.6	3.3	0.3	4.8	0.5	0.8	5.3	0.2	6.8
All manufacturing	1.2	0.3	4.9	0.2	6.6	0.8	0.7	4.6	0.2	6.3
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1.0	-	4.6	0.1	5.7	0.4	0.3	2.9	0.5	4.1
Other Industries ..	0.6	-	4.3	-	4.9	0.8	0.5	6.3	0.1	7.7
All Industries	1.1	0.2	4.7	0.2	6.2	0.7	0.6	4.7	0.2	6.2

(D. Dismissed; R. Retrenched; L. Left; O. Other Reasons).

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CANBERRA, A.C.T.

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